



** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/preparing-newly-fallen-black-walnuts>

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Preparing newly fallen black walnuts

K-State horticulture expert shares tips for harvesting and curing

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Many homeowners who have a black walnut tree in their yard look forward to the nuts it drops in the fall. Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said knowing what to look for is key to successfully harvesting and curing black walnuts.

“Black walnuts are ready to be harvested when the hull can be dented with your thumb,” Domenghini said. “You can also wait until the nuts start falling from the tree.”

Soon after harvesting, the hull – the hard outer coating of the nut – needs to be removed. If not removed in a timely manner, the stain from the hull can leech inside and discolor the meat. This staining will also result in an undesirable off-flavor.

Before hulling the nuts, ensure you wear gloves, Domenghini said. Black walnuts contain a stubborn dye that will stain concrete, hands, clothing, or anything it touches. Once it stains, the dye is almost impossible to remove.

With gloves on, there are several methods you can employ to hull the nuts. The nuts can be run through a corn sheller or pounded through holes in a board.

“The hole must be big enough for the nut, but smaller than the hull,” Domenghini said.

Another method is to drive over the nuts on a gravel driveway.

“This will break the hull but not crack the nut,” she said.

After husking, place the unshelled nuts in a tub of water to wash and discard any that float. They are likely empty.

Nuts can then be dried by spreading them in no more than three layers deep in a cool, dry place. A garage or tool shed will work. After about two weeks, the nuts should be dried and ready to enjoy by themselves or in your favorite fall dish.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a [weekly Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter by emailing hortsupport@ksu.edu. For garden and yard-related questions contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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For more information:
Cynthia Domenghini
Cdom@ksu.edu